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Security Council

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Letter dated 29 April 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 25 April 2003, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 25 April 2003 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on SFOR operations for March 2003. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) George **Robertson**

Enclosure

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-31 March 2003) there were just over 12,600 troops of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from the NATO allies and from 12 non-NATO countries.

2. During the period under review, the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable despite reports of some ethnically-motivated violence.[1]

3. On 9 March, a rocket grenade was fired into a betting shop in Mostar. This incident is believed to be criminally motivated. On 10 March, five Bosnian Serb returnees working in fields in Brvnik were killed by an anti-personnel mine. The explosion happened in an area which was known to be mined.

4. On 7 March, SFOR carried out a search in support of the Office of the High Representative at the Serbian Democratic Party headquarters in Pale and Lukavica, targeting the two key figures supporting the network protecting Radovan Karadzic. SFOR confiscated documents and electronic recording equipment and took them away for analysis.

Security

5. SFOR continues to contribute to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina; monitor compliance by the Entity Armed Forces; conduct inspections and monitor consolidation of weapons storage sites; provide support to the international organizations working in theatre, and to the Federation authorities in collecting weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest; and monitor possible terrorist-related threats throughout the country.

6. The total number of items collected during the month under Operation Harvest included: 596 small arms (rifles, pistols and revolvers); 94,899 rounds of ammunition less than 20 mm; 299 rounds of ammunition between 20 mm and 76 mm; 21 rounds of ammunition greater than 76 mm; 5,404 hand grenades; 208 mines; 117.5 kilograms of explosives; and 2,425 other items (mortars, mortar rounds, rifle grenades, attack rockets and hand-made ordnance).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. On 7 March, SFOR carried out a number of unannounced inspections at military facilities belonging to the Republika Srpska and the Federation in Banja Luka, Bihac and Bijeljina to ensure compliance with the Dayton Peace Accords and the "Instructions to the Parties". SFOR inspected and removed information kept by the 410th Intelligence Detachment of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS) to check on compliance.

[1] Three explosions which occurred in Mostar and Banja Luka were reported by SFOR at the end of the last reporting period. In one of those incidents, a grenade exploded in the flat occupied by a family of returnees, killing the father and injuring his son.

8. On 17 March, the Republika Srpska Supreme Defence Council sent the final report on the Orao affair to the Commander of SFOR and, on the same day, the Bijeljina Public Prosecutor filed charges against 17 Republika Srpska officials who were either involved in or had tried to cover up the illegal export of weapons. Among those accused was the VRS Acting Chief of Staff, General Momir Zec. Although General Zec was the only official named, the Prosecutor's office described the criminal charges against the others in some detail. Three company officials were accused of illegally producing and trading weapons while three others were charged with abuse of office. Five senior VRS officers of the commission that investigated the case and who denied any violation of the United Nations arms embargo were charged with covering up illegal exports. Six customs officials were charged with abuse of office.

9. During the period under review, SFOR monitored 220 training and movement activities: 85 VRS and 135 VF (Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). SFOR monitored 87 mine-clearing activities: 81 VRS and 6 VF. SFOR also carried out 136 inspections and verification of weapons storage sites: 70 VRS and 66 VF.

Cooperation with international organizations

10. Within capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations working in theatre.

Outlook

11. The security situation is expected to remain stable.